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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 LONDON 000435

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CG, NI, SF, UK

SUBJECT: AFRICA: HMG'S PRIORITIES TO DISCUSS WITH THE OBAMA  
ADMINISTRATION, SCOPE FOR INFLUENCE

REF: A. LONDON 409

[1](#)B. LONDON 339

[1](#)C. LONDON 434

Classified By: Political Minister Counselor Greg Berry, reasons 1.4 (b/  
d).

[1](#)1. (C/NF) Summary. UK officials have highlighted Prime Minister Gordon Brown's priorities in Africa and previewed the core messages which the Prime Minister plans to bring to discussions with U.S. officials. Zimbabwe, Sudan, Somalia, and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) remain HMG's top priorities, and Nigeria and South Africa are "strategic countries" where HMG assesses the USG and HMG would benefit from improved relations and from better coordination. Brown likely plans to propose developing joint strategies for all of these countries. He also wants to reframe the USG-HMG Africa dialogue for a more strategic outlook on conflict prevention, poverty, governance reform, selective multilateralism, and rebuilding relationships with regional powers. Paramount among these initiatives for Brown will be working together to improve UN peacekeeping operations in Africa (reftel C). Economic development and relieving human suffering through conflict resolution are HMG's Africa priorities under Brown's leadership. In this environment, achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) appears to trump development of strategic relations with individual African nations. In championing USG positions, offering arguments that focus on development initiatives, achieving the MDGs, and improving conflict situations will have the greatest resonance. Developing joint strategies and early bilateral coordination on peacekeeping reform are the most natural entry points for USG messages and will get the most traction. End summary.

[1](#)2. (SBU) Prime Minister's Special Advisor for Africa and Development Brendan Cox, FCO Africa Director Adam Wood, DFID East/Central Africa Director Dave Fish, DFID West/Southern Africa Director Beverley Warmington and Cabinet Office Senior Africa Policy Advisor Anna French highlighted HMG's Africa priorities and previewed the Prime Minister's Africa message for Washington in a round of separate meetings with emboffs February 12 - 17.

New Energy to the Old Crises and  
A More Strategic USG-HMG Dialogue on Africa  
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[1](#)3. (C/NF) PM Brown wants to bring new energy to addressing the crises in Sudan, Zimbabwe, Somalia, and the DRC and wants to reframe the USG-HMG Africa dialogue with a more strategic outlook on conflict prevention, poverty, governance reform,

selective multilateralism, and rebuilding relationships with regional powers (especially Nigeria and South Africa).

#### Sudan

14. (C/NF) HMG has been pleased with U.S.-UK cooperation on Sudan and Darfur, CPA implementation, and a coordinated response to the ICC indictment through close P3 coordination, as reinforced by more recent, open discussions with Russia and China. The UK hopes to maintain this close coordination and agree on the international community's strategic focus in 2009, e.g. supporting the UN/AU Chief Mediator/Qatar in the Darfur political process and CPA implementation. Cox said the ICC indictment is presenting new opportunities, and there may be scope for a "grand bargain" on CPA implementation and Darfur. He noted that thus far the international community's strategy on Sudan had been "too tactical" and needed to be "more long-term." Fish argued that South Sudan needs more support, especially in light of the global economic crisis. HMG does not have a mechanism for direct budget support because South Sudan does not have an independent status that the IFIs recognize. He said in spite of the major issues with Government of South Sudan spending priorities, South Sudan might be the best location for the USG "to dip its toes" in budget support.

#### Zimbabwe

15. (C/NF) HMG supports the USG's active engagement on Zimbabwe and sees close coordination with the USG as a

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mechanism for maintaining the international community's consensus on cautious re-engagement, pressure through targeted sanctions, and re-engaging South Africa and other regional players. The UK also wants to coordinate closely on a "calibrated response" to returning to a tougher line if/when the ZANU-PF/MDC power-sharing government falls apart. Wood said HMG is "highly skeptical" about the power-sharing agreement, but does not want to do anything publicly that might provoke its failure. Wood noted that HMG wants to "keep an eye on the long-term" with Zimbabwe, and Cox said now is the time to do bold thinking and planning on Zimbabwe policy (reftel A). (NOTE: Per reftel B, HMG's priority on Zimbabwe contrasts with many London-based think tank specialists who argue the crisis in Zimbabwe has had too much international attention and should be approached as a "contained crisis" and a regional issue. They advocated a "tough and quiet" approach. END NOTE.)

#### Somalia

16. (C/NF) After difficult discussions with the USG over deployment of a UN peacekeeping operation in Somalia, HMG is keen to see the USG more active in supporting the on-going political dialogue in the Djibouti process, establishment of better international cooperation, security sector reform, and to bolster AMISOM's strength (in lieu of a UN PKO force). Fish and Wood agreed HMG sees renewed opportunity for progress with President Sharif. Fish said DFID was not in a position to pledge new money to Somalia, but said he thought USG support to local security initiatives would be timely.

#### DRC

17. (C/NF) HMG supports a political solution in DRC that allows for targeted military action as necessary and hopes the USG will continue support for this framework and will work on improved natural resource trade policies in the East. Fish said the economic situation in DRC was a "mess." He also said the change in situation caused by DRC President Kabila's recent alliance with Rwanda President Kagame was

"relatively positive, but carried loads of risks," such how long Rwanda would be in Eastern DRC and what it would do while it is there, the political ramifications for Kabila, and the humanitarian impact from so many militaries/armed groups in the area. Fish noted that UN Envoy Obasanjo had played a "helpful and productive role," and while that had flagged of late, it was clear that Obasanjo could play a positive role. Wood noted that the French had indicated to him that President Sarkozy wants to launch an economic transparency initiative in the DRC. Wood said HMG supported initiatives on resource transparency, but questioned what Kabila would politically be able to do with the Rwandans in Eastern DRC. Fish also noted that France may "very publicly" give DFID money to spend in Rwanda, as an initial way for the French to begin re-engagement with Rwanda.

#### A More Strategic Outlook

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18. (C/NF) In reframing the USG-HMG dialogue on Africa, French explained HMG sees several strands of engagement:

-- Conflict Prevention: HMG wants to consider options for a more strategic approach to crisis management and peacekeeping in Africa, which clearly prioritizes issues, explores alternatives to traditional peacekeeping, and building indigenous military and civilian capacity. (Reftel C details the UK's approach to peacekeeping reform.)

-- Poverty: With volatility in commodity prices and reduced Diaspora remittances because of the global economic downturn, HMG wants to ensure that poverty reduction continues to move forward by holding OECD countries to their ODA pledges, ensuring markets remain open, and creating space for developing countries to have a voice in the debate.

-- Governance Reform: To improve governance and ensure sustainable development, HMG wants to step up support for African institutions through capacity building programs, reinvigorating political debate in the media, and using intelligence and law enforcement agency resources to expose corruption and international criminality.

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-- Selective Multilateralism: HMG values the multilateral approach. DFID is increasing the share of its funding that is delivered via multilaterals such as the UN and World Bank, and has been actively encouraging the World Bank to spend its resources more quickly to mitigate the impact of the financial crisis in the developing world. In political terms, HMG also hopes to create space in the UN and other international fora for greater engagement with China on Africa and development issues in order to secure positive Chinese engagement.

-- Rebuilding Relationships with Regional Powers: HMG assesses improvement in its (and the USG's) relations with Nigeria and South Africa as strategically important. The UK will want to discuss how to move these relationships forward in the face of Nigerian corruption and tenuous relations with South Africa over its rotation in the UNSC and the Zimbabwe crisis.

#### Comment - Scope for Influence

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19. (C/NF) Commensurate with his Scottish Presbyterian upbringing and economic training, Brown thinks of addressing African issues in terms of economic development and relieving human suffering, especially through conflict resolution which plays well with the British public. HMG, at Brown's direction, is focused on achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), which HMG sees as tangible proof that development assistance works and that British taxpayer's money has been spent well. Prioritization of development,

however, has come at the cost of developing strategic relations with individual Africa countries. Major regional players like Nigeria and South Africa have taken a backseat to crisis areas like DRC and Zimbabwe.

¶10. (C/NF) HMG's desire to work up joint strategy papers and to collaborate on improving peacekeeping operations give the USG scope to influence HMG in favor of U.S. strategic priorities. If we move forward in these discussions, arguments that focus on development initiatives, achieving the MDGs, and identifying concrete ways to improve war-torn areas will have the greatest resonance. At the same time, HMG might be well served by reminders of the importance of strategic relations with Africa's regional players, if both governments are to achieve our shared long-term objectives in Africa. End comment.

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